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ABSTRACT

Problems and issues concerning recruitment and professional development of academic staff at higher education institutions in China are identified, and successful faculty development programs are described. Problems include: low qualifications of a significant proportion of the staff; low percentage of senior faculty; abnormal age distribution of academic staff (i.e., 85% of professors are over age 60 and 99% of associate professors are over age 45; imbalances in the distribution of academic staff by geographic regions, institutions, and disciplines; lack of mobility; and overspecialization. In addition to short-term institutes/courses and workshops/seminars, faculty development programs provide intensive training over two years for qualified teachers/researchers in a certain field. Faculty can also participate in research programs related to the field of teaching, as well as curriculum development and teaching material development. Along with recruiting professionals to teaching part-time, teachers lacking practical experiences in their field should be allowed to acquire experience. Additional dimensions of faculty development include research in the field of professional development with an emphasis on effective teaching, and international educational exchange and communication. (SW)

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THE TRAINING AND PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT OF ACADEMIC STAFF IN THE PEOPLE'S REPUBLIC OF CHINA

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I. Introduction

In 1984 there were 902 regular higher education institutions in the People's Republic of China, with a total enrolment of 1,395,656 undergaduate students and 47,922 postgraduate students. The total number of full-time college teachers is 315,021. Besides, there are 1,157 higher education institutions for adults with a total enrolment of 1,292,100 students and a staff of full-time teachers totalling 37,900.

For the past 36 years Chinese regular higher education institutions have supplied the nation with 4.4 million college graduates who have made significant contribution to the socialist construction of new China.

In order to avoid a lengthy paper the author decides to begin with a brief survey of the problems and issues Chinese higher education institutions have to face in coping with the recruitment and professional development of academic staff (Section II), rather than giving an account of achievement in this field, in view of the fact that fuller coverage of achievement and adequate statistical information are given in other papers presented by my Chinese colleagues here. In Section III will be given a brief description of successful programmes of faculty development and some suggestions for future actions.

II. Problems and Issues

From the figures of college enrolment and teaching staff given above it seems that Chinese higher education institutions have the most favourable student/faculty ratios in the world, an average of 4.4:1 in the year 1984. However, underneath the numerical strength and favourable student/faculty ratios obtaining in Chinese institutions, it cannot be overlooked that there exist a number of serious weaknesses and anomalies in the composition and quality of Chinese academic staff. Following are some of the more important problems and issues we have to tackle.

1. Low qualifications of a significant proportion of staff. Most Chinese college teachers have been drawn from the graduates of higher education institutions without any formal advanced training. According to the latest statistics available (October 1983), among a total of 306,609 full-time college teachers, only 27,424 or 8.94% have had any postgraduate training, the biggest group is college graduates numbering 231,926 or 75.64% of the total, followed by graduates of short-cycle institutions or courses numbering 40,745 or 13.29% of the total, with the rest consisting of personnel of even lower qualifications.

It must be pointed out that during the years of rapid quantitative expansion of enrolment, it was inevitable that higher education institutions had to recruit a substantial number of new college graduates, thus making it more difficult to ensure the quality of

their junior staff. The problem of low qualifications was further complicated by the fact that when higher education institutions resumed their operation in the early seventies, the students admitted were generally of very low standard and therefore for quite a number of years Chinese universities and colleges were deprived of qualified graduates at the baccalaureate level, let alone those with advanced training.

2. Low percentage of senior faculty. According to the statistics of 1984 there are 315,021 full-time college teachers, of which 4,452 or 1.41% are full professors, 28,217 or 8.96% are associate professors. In other words senior staff of professorial ranks is merely 10.37% of the total. In historical perspective it should be mentioned that the situation has worsened seriously over the years. In 1949 senior staff of these ranks was 43.3% of the total (29.8% professors and 13.5% associate professors).

3. Underdevelopment of postgraduate education. The above-mentioned problems are obviously related to the fact that for a long time the development of postgraduate training had been quite inadequate or neglected. It was altogether suspended from 1966 to 1976 during the cultural revolution. For more details please refer to another paper written by me and entitled "Postgraduate Education in the People's Republic of China". There has been rapid development of postgraduate education since 1978. However, it is far from adequate in meeting the needs of the nation for highly qualified professionals at the postgraduate level.

Another interrelated problem is inadequate support to research in the universities--- a vital issue which cannot be addressed here.

4. Abnormal age distribution of academic staff. The problem of aging is very acute as evidenced by relevant statistics given in the appended table.

The problem of aging is especially serious among academic staff of senior ranks, with only 4 professors under 45 years old (none under 40), 85% of them over 60, with 99% of associate professors over 45 and a negligible number of them under 40 (a mere 10!). There is also a problem of aging with lecturers. There are several factors which have contributed to the problem of aging. (1) For many years there was no promotion of faculty of all ranks, owing to abnormal conditions prevailing in the country. It goes without saying that the cultural revolution did the greatest damage to higher education in general, with inevitable harmful effects on all aspects of academic life, and not the least in the field of staff recruitment and development. (2) The suspension of higher education for a number of years during the cultural revolution and the low standards of students admitted after its resuption have had their indelibe imprint on the composition and quality of academic staff. China has lossed at least one million well-trained professional manpower. (See the appended graph[3] at the end of the paper)

5. Imbalances in the distribution of academic staff by geographical regions, institutions and disciplines. It is difficult for economically and culturally backwards regions, less prestigious or newly established institutions to get their due share of qualified teachers. Emerging fields of science and technology, of course, have difficulty in meeting their needs for qualified teachers. Even for conventional fields of science and mathematics, and foreign languages, many universities and colleges suffer from an inadequate supply of new teachers. In the realm of the humanities

and social sciences, some fields and disciplines which have been neglected for quite a long time, such as politics and law, economics and finance, management sciences, sociology, etc., but are now expanding quickly, also have great problems in getting enough qualified staff.

6. Excessive inbreeding of academic staff and lack of mobility.

For the past three decades most old institutions have depended on their own output of graduates as main sources of newly recruited staff, giving rise to the phenomenon of excessive inbreeding of academiv staff. Even a significant proportion of postgraduate students are drawn from their Alma Mater. The lack of mobility is the result mainly of the employment system prevailing in China.

7. Overspecialization. Because many college teachers were themselves the products of an education which suffered from oversecialization and insufficient grounding in the fundamentals, they are qualified to teach only in a very narrow field and therefore cannot easily adapt to new development in science and technology and find it difficult to teach courses in allied fields. This factor and the excessively rigid organizational pattern of grouping teachers into rather narrow fields have become serious obstacles to sound professional development of academic staff and to full and rational utilization of available human resources.

Most, if not all, of the problems and issues mentioned above cannot be solved in a few years. However, their gradual solution must be given adequate attention in the years to come in order to ensure a healthy development of higher education in China.

III. Staff Development Programmes

Generally speaking, both the the educational authorities at the central and provincial levels and higher education institutions themselves all devote a great deal of effort to the training and professional development of academic staff. This is evidenced by the fact that many teachers were granted leave of absence on salary so that they may upgrade their qualifications by various means. The duration of leave granted is very liberal. From 1977 to 1983 the percentage of full-time teachers given leave of absence of one year's duration or more fluctuated around 5% of the total during the past eight years.

A recent development in the field of professional development is the establishment of two Centres for Information Exchange and Organization of Staff Development Programmes in Beijing and Wuhan (affiliated to Beijing Normal University and Wuhan University respectively) under the auspices of the State Education Commission. They are expected to coordinate faculty development programmes in different institutions and to supply interested quarters with the necessary information so as to avoid duplication of efforts and to promote the sharing of scarce resources, They will also serve as a kind of clearing house for facilitating exchange of visiting lecturers. They will organize intensive courses or institutes or summer institutes for the explicit purpose of providing continuing education to college teachers. They will also organize research projects in the field of faculty development, drawing into this effort the investigators scattered in various institutions.

Following is a description of some effective staff development programmes and some suggestions for future actions:

1. Special Intensive Programmes Extending Over Two Years For Training a Core of Qualified Teachers and/or Researchers in a Cer-

tain Field.

In the mid-fifties such intensive programmes were first tried out with success in engineering mechanics and physics of semi-conductors. A two-year course of mechanics was run for several years, drawing its senior teaching staff from Qing Hua University and the Chinese Academy of Sciences. In the field of physics of semi-conductors, several universities pool their resources in setting up a training course in Beijing University. Professor Xie Xide of Fudan University and Professor Huang Kun of Beijing University all took prominent part in this effort. The trainees of these programmes were all carefully selected to ensure success and they became the pioneers in the respective fields in China.

During recent years, with the development of postgraduate education in China and the keenly felt needs for the quick expansion of certain fields, a number of similar programmes in the form of 1- or 2-year postgraduate courses without awarding the master's degrees have been organized. For example, in Nankai University from 1981 onwards a 2-year course of sociology has been in existence with the support of several universities and the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences.

Besides, there are less formal courses extending over six months or one year catering to the needs of upgrading the qualifications of young teachers.

2. Short-term institutes or courses. They are far easier to organize. They count by several hundreds per year. Those sponsored by the Ministry of Education (now the State Education Commission) alone and catering to* They are open to college teachers working in the same or kindred fields. With the advance of computer science and technology, all institutions of higher learning keenly felt the need to wipe out computer illiteracy among as many teachers and researchers as possible. Many universities and colleges have organized short-term courses for teaching the computer languages and the techniques of programming.

3. Secondment for upgrading qualifications. Many college teachers, especially the younger ones, have been given opportunity to be seconded for service on the staff of another institution where they can fulfill the duty of a teacher at reduced workload in combination with self-study or the attendance of certain courses under the guidance of experienced teachers or mentors. Advanced experimental techniques may also be learned in this way, but here on-hand experience is more important than theoretical grounding.

4. Taking part in research programmes related to the field of teaching. Sometimes this was done deliberately with a view to training future teachers of a certain field. For example, in Huazhong University of Science and Technology, both the leadership and the teachers of the speciality "vacuum technology" reached consensus on that it would be feasible and advantageous for the teachers to shift from vacuum technology to laser technology. Then they decided to embark on a fairly ambitious programme of laser research and did succeed in learning a lot about laser technology in this way and were later able to offer a good undergraduate programme in laser technology.

5. Taking part in projects of curriculum development and the production of teaching materials in the form of new textbooks or lecture notes, selected readings in a certain field. It is common practice in China to organize the development of new curricula, syllabi and textbooks by pooling the resources of different

* the needs of assistants for upgrading their qualifications exceed 480 in number with a total enrolment of nearly 5,000 in the current academic year 1985-86.

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institutions. Major revisions of old curricula, syllabi and textbooks are also undertaken in a similar way.

6. Workshops and seminars on some important themes. They may be organized on the national, regional or institutional levels. At the institutional level seminars may be organized in a planned way, to be held at definite intervals, with carefully defined topics. For example, in Fudan University the faculty of the Department of Mathematics have had a very good and long tradition of holding seminars with the participation of faculty members, postgraduate and senior undergraduate students. These seminars have contributed a great deal to the selection and training of several generations of talented mathematicians. During recent years Fudan University has organized monthly seminars on the surface sciences, drawing participants from departments of mathematics, physics, chemistry and biology and initiating a successful programme of interdiscipliary research.

7. To acquire indispensable practical experiences in one's field. this is of paramount importance in such fields as medicine, engineering, law, management sciences, etc. The problem is more acute in engineering. The rapid development of higher education in China and the short supply of highly qualified professionals in these fields as well as the lack of mobility of personnel across different sectors (production, research, teaching) all contribute to the problem existing now. Since the early fifties, Chinese students of engineering have been required to have industrial practice three times during the course of study under the supervision of their teachers. It is deplorable that this link between university and industry has weakened. However, of late, it is encouraging to see the formation of an increasing number of "teaching-research-production-associations" which help to strengthen university-industry cooperation in various fields and involve the active participation of university teachers and students.

Efforts should be made to induce highly qualified scientists, engineers, medical practitioners, lawyers, etc. to teach in higher education institutions on a part-time basis and at the same time efforts should be made to help those teachers lacking in practical experiences to acquire them in a systematic way.

8. Research in the field of the professional development of academic staff with a particular emphasis on effective teaching.*

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*It is interesting to note the growing interest in this field within the international higher education community, as evidenced by the convening in 1979 in Oxford the International Conference on the Training and Professional Development of Academic Staff - Practice and Purpose and I have chosen the title of my paper after the name of the conference. In a recent issue of Higher Education (Vol. 14 No.1, February 1985,Amsterdam) is published an article written b by Ingrid Moses of Queesland and entitled "Academic Development Units and the Improvement of Teaching" which gives detailed description of current development in Australian universities and colleges. During my recent visit to the Federal Republic of Germany I came to know the existence of similar centres in a number of German institutions and paid a visit to one of them - Hochschuldidaktik Zentrum Aachen. German efforts in this field may be seen from the series of books published by Beltz Verlag under the heading of Blickpunkt Hochschuldidaktik and No. 76 of the series is entitled "Angewandte Hochschuldidaktik - Konzeption, Praxis, Bewertung", a collection of seven papers.

It is encouraging to see the upsurge of interest in higher education research throughout the country. Many institutions of higher learning and provincial, municipal and ministerial bureaus of higher education have set up their own research units with a proliferation of publications, including journals, selected papers and some monographs. Research in the field of academic staff development and management is very lively at the moment and covers every aspect of it - including the selection, recruitment, promotion of academic staff, the awarding of academic ranks and other related matters.

Some institutions have pioneered in setting up data banks for academic staff and have analysed the current situation of faculty (distribution by educational attainment, academic rank, age and other indicators with the aid of computers. The State Education Commission itself has initiated a programme of keeping a Management Information System for academic staff management with an input of data from all Chinese higher education institutions directly and with the relevant data updated at regular intervals. Researchers are trying to find optimal ways with the aid of computer simulation to solve the problems in staff development and management.

9. The international dimension of staff development.

From 1978 to June 30 1984 Chinese higher education institutions sent about 16,000 faculty members and students (mostly postgraduate) abroad for advanced study and/or research, of which about 55% have returned to China. Their exposure to modern development in science and technology, innovations in college teaching and their own achievements in advanced research all help to enhance the quality of instruction and research in the institutions concerned. They have been able to maintain contact with their foreign teachers and colleagues after their return to China and a number of fruitful cooperative research projects have been initiated by them. In the years to come more young college graduates and recipients of domestic advanced degrees will go abroad for advanced study.

The number of foreign teachers working in Chinese institutions is steadily increasing and during the current year in the institutions under the direct jurisdiction of SEDC alone there are nearly 600 foreign teachers working now, mostly teaching languages, on a long term basis, and about 750 foreign teachers and scholars have come to these institutions to give lectures on a short term basis, mostly four weeks and among them are many distinguished scholars of international standing. Their services in China will be an important contribution to the promotion of scholarly exchanges and communications between Chinese institutions and foreign universities and between individual scholars.

III. Concluding Remarks

In coping with the problems and issues of academic staff development in China, it must be borne in mind the vast differences between regions, institutions and disciplines and suitable approaches and measures have to be taken accordingly. For example, in part of our key universities, they have advanced to a stage when they can recruit their junior staff mainly from the recipients of the master's degrees and their professional development is obviously different from those without any advanced training. Some problems are peculiar to the Chinese setting which may not be easily understood by our foreign colleagues. For example, we place emphasis on the professional development of middle-age faculty, because they have not be favoured with appropriate opportunities for advanced study and re-

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search during their more youthful days.

In order to help my readers to better understand the relations or contradictions between quantitative expansion of higher education and the maintenance of quality and their implications I have drawn several graphs to illustrate the points in question.

As a matter of strategy higher education in China will continue to expand in the coming decades and it will be further diversified to cater to the needs of the economic and social development of the country as well as the needs of different clientele. The expansion of short-cycle higher education and the development of higher education for adults will be given even greater attention than hitherto. I myself would like to see that the rate of growth of higher education will be kept within reasonable bounds so that the provision of qualified staff and physical facilities will be able to keep pace with it without undesirable lowering of standard of staff recruited. On the whole the continuous expansion of higher education in China does create one of the most important and favourable conditions to solve the problems and issues in the recruitment and professional development of academic staff in China, especially the infusion of young blood and the mobility of staff.

If my paper can help the readers to better understand the problems and issues of academic staff development and management in the context of quantitative expansion of higher education in China, I'd feel my efforts amply rewarded.

~~Acknowledgement: In the course of writing this paper the author discussed with Mr. Zhang Bingliang of the Office of Academic Staff Management.~~

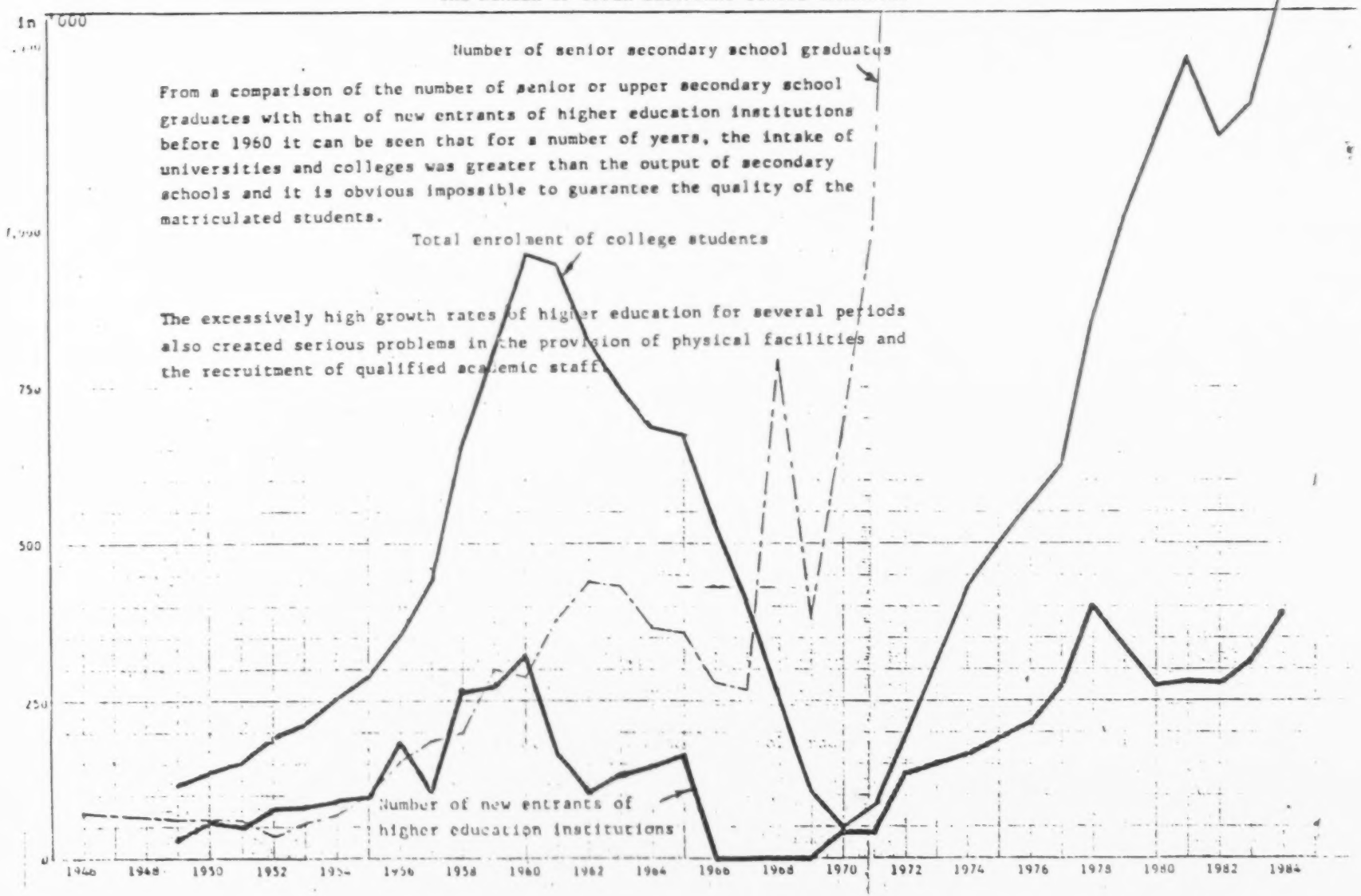
Acknowledgement: In the course of writing this paper the author discussed a number of problems and issues of staff development dealt with here with Mr. Zhang Bingliang of the Office of Academic Staff Management, SEDC, and some statistical data were provided by him. However, the author is solely responsible for the views expressed.

Table 1 AGE DISTRIBUTION OF FULL-TIME COLLEGE TEACHERS FOR ACADEMIC YEAR 1984-1985

	Number of teachers by rank	Under 30 (%)	31-35 (%)	36-40 (%)	41-45 (%)	46-50 (%)	51-55 (%)	56-60 (%)	Over 61 (%)	Additional Data
Total	315,021 100	82,671 26.2	25,981 8.2	27,641 8.8	42,156 13.4	67,791 21.5	38,661 12.3	17,113 5.4	13,007 4.1	
Professor	4,452 100				4	37 0.8	168 3.8	458 10.3	3,785 85.0	61-65 : 904 66-70 :1,094 71 &+ :1,787
Associate Professor	28,217 100		1	9	275 1.0	3,850 13.6	10,767 38.2	7,642 27.1	5,673 20.1	61-65 :3,313 66 &+ :2.360
Lecturer	136,669 100	163 0.1	629 0.5	8,445 6.2	32,912 24.1	58,516 42.8	25,264 18.5	7,846 5.7	2,894 2.1	
Instructor	31,748 100	9,186 28.9	3,243 10.2	5,009 15.8	5,818 18.3	4,634 14.6	2,173 6.8	1,069 3.4	616 1.9	
Assistant	113,935 100	73,322 64.4	22,108 19.4	14,178 12.4	3,147 2.8	754 0.7	289 0.3	98	39	

G Graph 1

TOTAL ENROLMENT OF COLLEGE STUDENTS, THE NUMBER OF NEW ENTRANTS AND THE NUMBER OF UPPER SECONDARY SCHOOL GRADUATES


In '000
Number of senior secondary school graduates
From a comparison of the number of senior or upper secondary school graduates with that of new entrants of higher education institutions before 1960 it can be seen that for a number of years, the intake of universities and colleges was greater than the output of secondary schools and it is obvious impossible to guarantee the quality of the matriculated students.
Total enrolment of college students
The excessively high growth rates of higher education for several periods also created serious problems in the provision of physical facilities and the recruitment of qualified academic staff.
750
500
250
0
Number of new entrants of higher education institutions
1946
1948
1950
1952
1954
1956
1958
1960
1962
1964
1966
1968
1970
1972
1974
1976
1978
1980
1982
1984

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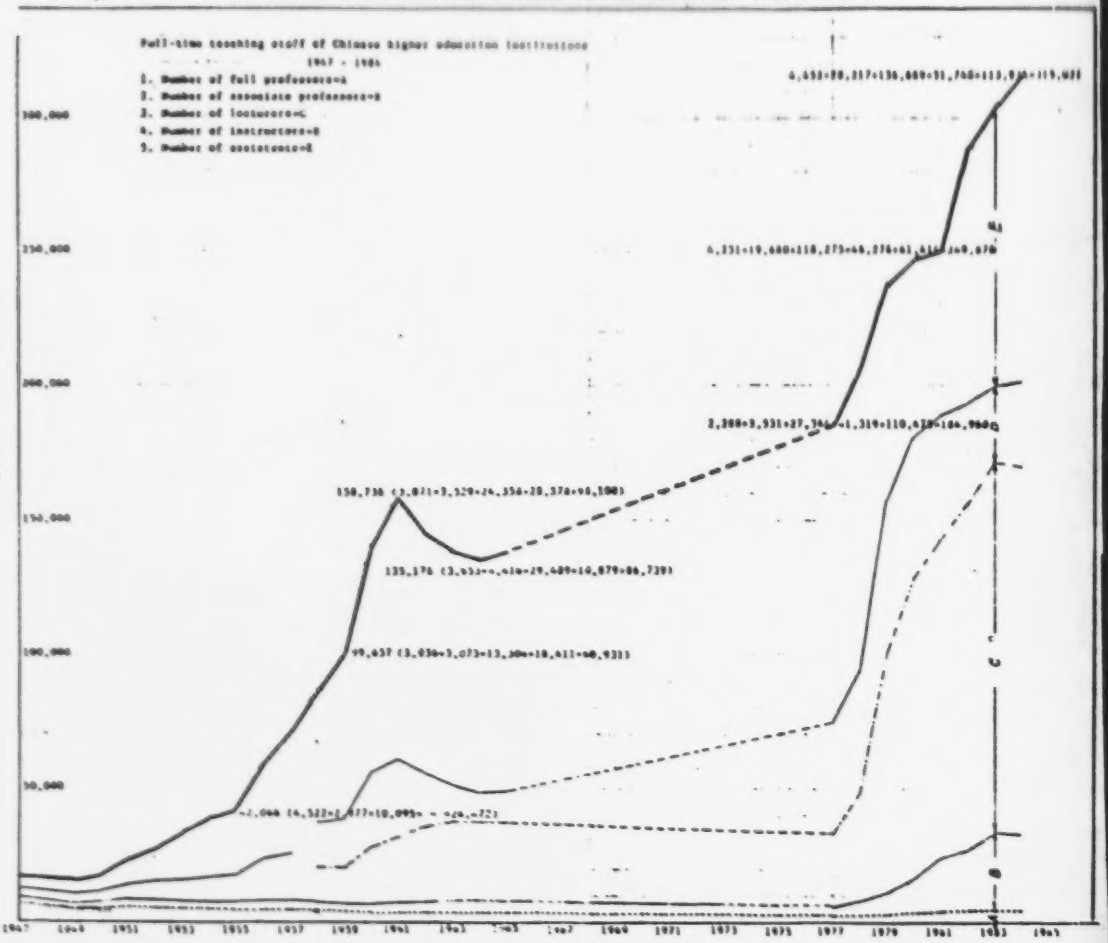
Graph 2 FULL-TIME ACADEMIC STAFF OF CHINESE HIGHER EDUCATION INSTITUTIONS



Sources of statistics: Achievement of Education in China - Statistics 1949-1983 provides all the necessary information for the years from 1947 to 1983, and the figures for 1984 are provided by the Department of Planning of the State Education Commission of the People's Republic of China.

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Graph 3

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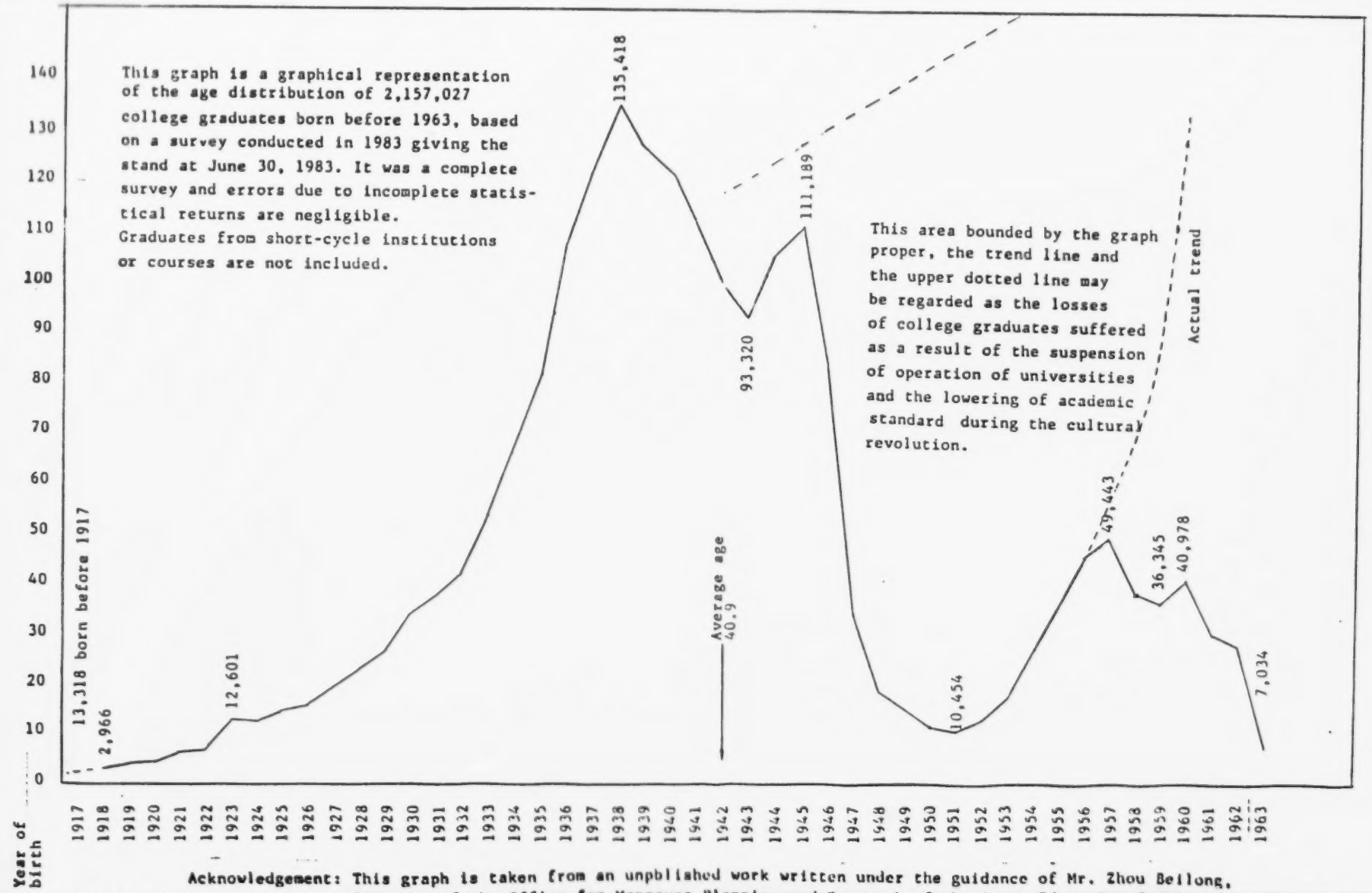
AGE DISTRIBUTION OF COLLEGE GRADUATES IN CHINA, (STAND, JUNE 30, 1983)


Number of persons in '000
This graph is a graphical representation of the age distribution of 2,157,027 college graduates born before 1963, based on a survey conducted in 1983 giving the stand at June 30, 1983. It was a complete survey and errors due to incomplete statistical returns are negligible.
Graduates from short-cycle institutions or courses are not included.
This area bounded by the graph proper, the trend line and the upper dotted line may be regarded as the losses of college graduates suffered as a result of the suspension of operation of universities and the lowering of academic standard during the cultural revolution.
Actual trend
13,318 born before 1917
2,966
12,601
135,418
111,189
93,320
Average age 40.9
10,454
49,443
36,345
40,978
7,034
Year of birth

Acknowledgement: This graph is taken from an unpblished work written under the guidance of Mr. Zhou Beilong, Director of the Office for Manpower Planning and Research of the State Education Commision.